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SOME HELPS AND HINDRANCES
TO
CHURCH GROWTH.

THE BISHOP'S ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

Convention of the Diocese of Missouri.

St. Louis, September 28th, 1880.

St. Louis, Mo.

WOODWARD, TIERNAN AND HALE, PRINTERS AND BINDERS, 212 LOCUST STREET.

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Ordered by Convention, That 1,000 copies of the Bishop's Address be printed separate from the Journal, and that the Clergy of the Diocese be requested to read it to their Congregations.

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"SOME HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO CHURCH GROWTH."

THE BISHOP'S ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF MISSOURI.

— SAINT LOUIS, —

SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1880.

MY DEAR BRETHREN OF THE CONVENTION:

I welcome you, after the lapse of another twelvemonth, to the common worship and to the common counsels of our annual assemblage. We come to render to each other an account of the manner in which we have used our several trusts in the Church, and of the degree in which they have prospered in our hands. There is no small anxiety connected with such a stewardship, and with the reckoning which we should look to ourselves to be able, under God, to make. To have positions of varying degree in the historical Church of Christ, which is charged by the commission of its Divine Founder with such high privileges and such grave responsibilities; to have our execution of such trusts, placed in a time when mental activity is so intense, and commercial enterprise and all other forms of social life are so quick and induce to corresponding earnestness in the Church's work; to have the special range of our activity in the centre of this teeming Mississippi Valley, which is to influence so vastly the destiny of the country:—all these considerations add gravity to our work, and lend a heightened interest to the results of the progress which we meet here to report.

I am very glad to report that the year has been for the Diocese one of marked gain. Considering who we are and the greatness of the need and of our opportunities, the year has in it very little whereof we can boast. I would be very sorry to lower aspirations and check endeavor by assuming a satisfaction at the results to be indicated. But at the same time

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there is very much which we may thank God that he has helped us to accomplish. I have been enabled to visit all parts of the Diocese, and to prosecute my other duties without interruption. I am anxious to mention my deep sense of gratitude for the considerate hospitality and personal attentions which have cheered the wandering, and for long periods, the homeless, life of the Bishop.

On account of its pressure upon the space of the journal, I contented myself last year with presenting the summarized results of my work during the year, instead of recounting the actions of each day. I shall pursue the same course this year. I have no disposition to throw into prominence the serious subtraction of time required for the thousands of miles of official travel in this vast Diocese. A better use of the time might, no doubt, be found, but this is not by any means the most toilsome business of the Bishop's life. I have on seventy-five occasions confirmed 404 persons. This number is in excess of those reported for several years past, although it does not reach the best results of some of our past years. The gain of the year in this regard witnesses, in some of the parishes, to singularly faithful and successful effort. But the gain does not hold everywhere. There is a very decided recedence in this element of our work in this city. That we should not advance here must arrest attention; that we should in this matter lose ground seriously from year to year, for several years past, challenges anxious inquiry as to the cause.

While we are not sufficiently supplied with clergymen and churches in any part of the Diocese, I have more than once in past years expressed strongly the judgment that we are especially undermanned in this city. We are not increasing our centers of work and influence here at all in proportion to the increase of population and the spread of the city. Several new localities are at this moment ripe for Church beginnings. People will not resort, in a practical, effective way to churches which are beyond a certain distance from their homes. Such enterprises cannot, however, generally spring into being self-reliant from the first. They must usually have had, for a time, the fostering care of older parishes, from which the nucleus comes. This must be by means of Sunday Schools started, and district visiting prosecuted from centers deliberately chosen in conference between the Bishop and parochial authorities, and on ground acquired, or leased with arrangements for acquisition for the Church. I do not think that there is any compensating advantage in Sunday Schools started in extemporized localities, in apartments ill calculated to encourage devotion, and which have to be rented with no provision for permanent occupation.

Or, better still, new centres are better started, when the older parish has an assistant to the Rector, who, while rendering service in and deriving subsistence from the mother parish, will devote himself to collecting and organizing the mission, and thus gradually relieve the older Church of the charge and care. If this takes off some families, it will soon be found that many more who had not previously been known will discover themselves at the more accessible centre. This requires some sacrifice and comprehensiveness of interest and intelligence on the part of Rectors and vestrymen; but I should hope that this would not be wholly wanting. Sure I am that unless we have this readiness to venture somewhat, our growth must still further be retarded. It is of interest, as tending to relieve the common burdens of the Diocese, that new organizations should be all the while developing to help perform the task.

[The Bishop having spoken in detail as to several matters of interest to the Diocese, proceeded as follows:]

The Ordinations of the year have reduced the number of our candidates for Orders to three. The supply is wholly uncertain, and is entirely inadequate, as well in view of the vast extent of the Diocese to be recruited with workmen, as also in view of the number of families from whom we might fairly expect a steady supply of aspirants for the sacred ministry. We have no right to hope that our needs will be made good from other Dioceses. They have their own needs and attractions. I very much doubt whether the duty of consecrating of their offspring to God for His especial service, or else redeeming them with a price that others may take their place, is steadily borne in upon the consciousness of our people. It is a privilege, but it is also a duty. Sensitive only to obligations which are distinctly mentioned and persistently urged, our people, I fear, come short here, partly because they are not made aware how the supply of the ministry is to be maintained, nor that the duty comes upon all to think whether they have not sons fitted to be of use to

the Church in this way. On the Sunday on which the stated offering for our Theological Education Fund is made, or some other near it, should be regularly preached a sermon urging the duty upon the consciences of the people. I do not dare to think when a single candidate for orders has proceeded from one of our large parishes in this city or elsewhere. There is a complete paralysis of conscience in this matter.

The matter is of critical importance to the growth of the Church, and to the esteem in which it will be held in the community. It will not be honored abroad if we are not evidently counting its service honorable. The ministry, when its functions are worthily fulfilled, is a most attractive work. It deals with the highest interests and the loftiest emotions and sentiments of our nature. Its objects call into exercise the strongest and purest passions for God and humanity. Its energies are constantly refreshed by the clear sense of the blessings to the individual and the community sure to follow from its faithful exercise. Chivalrous devotion and the prophetic sense of a sure recognition and result, make easier even the sacrifices to be endured. The energy and ability needed for success in any other life, will certainly reach equal results in the ministry: manliness would not desire any easier requisitions than these. If small natures can make even great things petty and contemptible, force and devotion, with the fair dealing accorded to religion in the community, aided by the help of God's grace, will secure honorable position, considerate treatment and steady advance to those who industriously toil to fit themselves for and continue themselves worthy of the stewardship of God's mysteries.

Inadequate preparations at first, or relaxed industry afterwards, will naturally tell against usefulness and success, and therefore the training of those looking forward to the ministry should be of the best. I crave the very worthiest things for God's sanctuary. Often, because the thought has only turned later in life to the subject of the ministry, the furnishing for it is necessarily incomplete, and this affects the estimate had of the office. Of course we all know of those who, by their burning zeal for souls and consuming love for Christ, and by good sense and industry have wrought results which put to shame the trained theologian; but no dependence on God's Spirit can justify us in despising the drill, the accuracy of knowledge and statement, the ready utterance, which comes from attention and study. Dash does for a while, but, in every war, West Point comes to the front at length.

As affecting this matter of the supply of the ministry, and other matters as well, I think that the low standard of devotion and piety in the families of many of our church people is very much to be lamented.

Judged by any of the tests which might be suggested:—the training of the children in christian knowledge and churchly ways, the infrequency of religious conversation in the house, the absence of family prayers, the small circulation of our church periodicals, the nature of the family reading on Sunday, the use which the latter part of the Lord's Day is put to, the anxiety of all our clergy about their Sunday night and week day services; we have, in all these, indications very much to be concerned about. We can readily see that few incentives to the Christian ministry could be expected from such surroundings and influences. Here is where so much trouble, individual and parochial, has its cause. We need much plain dealing, and plain loving speaking in these matters, and prayer that God would enkindle the love and deepen the devotion of our people. If the world must approach very near to the Church, it has no right to deaden its aspirations or paralyze its life. If our Lord did consent to eat with publicans and sinners, He did not sink His character in the act. He was there a God-man no less, to help by His presence and sympathy.

Without stopping to emphasize the other indications just now mentioned, I must plead for a greater attention to family prayer. I know not how any sense of the reality and value of religious things, or confidence in the honesty of open religious profession, or right filial and Christian hopes and habits can be maintained, when this primal duty of a family recognition of God is neglected. With an earnest desire, a way may be found to overcome obstacles to it. The time will come when other things preferred before this will appear very cheap in comparison. The parish and the diocese are affected by the Christian and churchly unintelligence, indifference and penury of the individual and the family.

Very much has been said of late about the friction between clergymen and their parishes, and the troubles of the vestry system. The matter is suggested by what we have just been considering. Some of the Bishops have thought the subject so critical this year as to be made the occasion of elaborate charges. I do not in the least desire to underrate the importance of the matter. As affecting the success and the comfort, and ultimately the supply of the ministry, and the respect and confidence which for their work's sake is their due, the character and tone of the vestry have very important relations. The trusts for the time in the hands of a vestry, of a temporal and indirectly of a spiritual sort, are much beyond the apparent appreciation of many of those who hold the office, and are appalling in view of the character of some of those who are at times elected to it. The material in some places from which to choose is not large; and sometimes the choice among those able to be

chosen is not the best. We have for years in this Diocese striven to lessen the risk of unwise choice by discouraging the premature formation of parishes, and to be content with the simple organization of missions, with the appointment of warden and treasurer, until there is more strength, more communicants from whom to choose the officers. It is sometimes forgotten that none are entitled by our organic law to vote for vestrymen or hold office as such, who disclaim or refuse conformity to the authority of the canons, doctrines, discipline and worship of this Church. Moreover an unwise choice is often directly attributable to the utter neglect of the parishioners to attend at the Easter meeting, and inform themselves of the condition of the parish, and assist in making the wisest choice of those who shall for the year bear the trusts.

But then sometimes, after all this is done, there is trouble and disagreement. To expect an entire absence of it is absurd and out of the question on any theory; to reduce it to its smallest proportions is as certainly the part of wisdom and charity. When the clergyman of their choice does his best, he is entitled to the loving coöperation and confidence of his people. His name and standing, almost as sensitive as that of a woman, are in their keeping. The salary may not be such as their ability, if fully developed, could easily accomplish, and this is allowed to come uncertainly and tardily. If impaired service, caused by anxiety, or the necessary falling into debt, ensues, on whom should the blame be charged? I am thoroughly persuaded that troubles come more frequently from thoughtlessness and inattention than from designed ill-will. But then thoughtlessness is sinful in those who have accepted responsibility. Vestrymen as well as others forget, in their absorption in business, how common and reciprocal the interests and duties of clergyman and layman are; how little of duty is yet done, even when money has been paid; how much of blame each one must put on himself if the Church fails to grow.

Critical help will be rendered in this matter as a deeper Christian spirit is had, as personal religious duty is more faithfully done, as all become better informed about the Church's laws and traditions, as there is more regular and devout attendance upon religious services; as there is had always a high-toned and manly confidence and conference on each side at the beginning of differences, seeing how much of purpose and aim both sides have in common. I dismiss as wholly chimerical and undesirable in the cure of any trouble, any such revolutionary procedure as the changing of the mode of appointment to parishes, by, for instance, the nomination of the Bishop, or any Diocesan Board of Nominators. I should regard anything which would draw apart the responsibility and

interests of the Rector and parish as disastrous to the welfare of both. For the same reason do I count out of all practical discussion the project suggested in some quarters, to "pool" all the parochial salaries, and pay all from a common fund. It would destroy all parochial enterprise, and no clergyman would feel that there was any one especially behind him. It would be against all good policy to exasperate, and reduce the functions of the laity. They are a fact, and are likely to continue a very important fact. England, which faulted us for introducing them into Church Councils, is itself now finding profit in following our example of giving them a place in its Diocesan Synods. It would be a sad day for the Church, in its hope to raise and bless this land, if it should become a caste; if the clergy and all Church interests should lose in any degree the benefit of the sober good sense and sagacity and energy of our laymen. Pray God they may become more and more imbued with a higher sense of the trusts to which they are called, and informed as to the Church's history and best methods of work. But far be the day when they shall regard the Church as less their own to love and to serve and to make sacrifices for than they do now.

It would be but affectation to profess an ignorance of the fact that differences in the manner of rendering our services have been in other Dioceses, far more than in our own, the cause of differences in parishes. This matter has troubled us the less because in this Diocese, on account of the sparseness of our numbers and the extent of territory which our clergy have to stretch themselves over, and the poverty of most of our congregations, our services are infrequent, and the arrangements of our services need to be of the simplest. Besides this, the vigorous life amidst which our work lies, and the strenuous opposition which we have to encounter tends to keep the Church to the simple principles which it is set to maintain. The difficulty, as I see it in most places, is not that there is exaggeration in ceremonial, but that it is almost impossible to secure a fitting decorum and richness for the appointments of God's house, and a reverence of demeanor while in it. The clergy are, I know, in these places, where there has been little disposition to reverence for sacred places and things, doing their best to inculcate those habits which ought to belong to every well-informed and well-balanced Christian character. With much to do and with little assistance, it is for them often to determine what they can do and what they must unwillingly leave undone. Even if they thought that it was desirable to have the Daily Service, they would ponder the question whether, single-handed and with much else pressing on them, it would be the best use of their strength to neglect other duties for this. But it should be, I

think, with all of our clergy in settled parishes, the disposition to reach as soon as possible the practice of administering the Holy Communion on every Sunday. Special circumstances may, in places, render this for a time impossible; but this is the standard to which I think we should come. These services on other than the first Sunday in the month might be at an earlier hour, and then, except on festivals, I should not think it necessary that the Ante-Communion service should be repeated. I have learned that in some places where services were held weekly or fortnightly, an interval of three and six months and longer have been allowed to elapse without the administration of the Holy Communion. I cannot approve of this.

It is not possible that in all places our services should be rendered alike. Our formularies allow a range of interpretation, and differing dispositions make use of this inclusiveness. Whatever usage can base itself upon the allowance of the Prayer Book, has its rightful place in the Church. In so far as law, either in this country or England, has recently set out to define legitimate use in our worship, it has restricted itself to what should not be done in connection with the Holy Communion. By this it declares that it will show less solicitude in restricting the expressions of a varying and advancing æsthetical taste, but is rigorously jealous of what will even remotely affect the expression of the Church's doctrine concerning the Sacrament of our Lord's death. There is a principle here evermore to be regarded. Tastes vary; the faith is one.

So too, while in England complaint of irregularity is confined to parishioners who may conceive themselves to be aggrieved, as though, if they are satisfied, all others may be supposed to be so; in this country by the placing of the duty of initiating inquiry into alleged irregularity in the hands of the Bishop or of the clergyman's brethren of the same order, there is a recognition of the principle that there is a community of interest in the matter, and that a wider circle than the congregation is affected by the action; that, in short, for this purpose the Diocese, and not the parish alone, is the unit whose interests are at stake and are to be considered. It is in view of this fact that I speak of the subject from this place.

It is a grand work which this Church is set to do and may do in this country. It appeals on different sides to various classes of men. The long range of its history, its secure grasp upon the earliest traditions of the best Christian centuries; the breadth of its principles and the simplicity of its faith; its worship stately at times and then adjusting itself to the needs of the humblest congregation; the compactness of its organization; the capacity for teaching and for beauty of its Christian year; its ability

to be at terms with the best culture and to be the binding link between rich and poor; the power to develop out of its resources agencies to minister to the sorrows and needs of men; the simplicity with which it y instinct avoids the petty trivialties of the day, and persistently presses its own divine work. We may cast aside all explosive statements as to the rapidity with which other forms of Christian activity are dissolving and coming into one with us. We may well recognize the learning, the vastness of the giving and the doing of those who walk not with us. We may reverently and gladly acknowledge the work of God's Holy Spirit in the lives and in the enterprises in those from whom we are separated. But outside of all this there is a vast and distinct work waiting for this Church to do in the land. Our weight and influence are not measured by our numbers. From many sides thought is being turned to it; it is the second choice of large and differing sections of people, waiting only for the opportunity to become their first choice. Its success would be a work of healing and peace. It will help those who are weary of negations and minute prescriptions, who desire the poise which comes from age, while there is yet place left for culture and independent thought.

But the clearness with which we see these possibilities is the measure of our impatience at anything which will needlessly hinder their fulfillment. Of course we know that statistics, even when taken with care, are not wholly reliable; but when taken by the same means for a series of years they are valuable for comparison. Now the result of the putting together of some figures relating to the Church's growth is, I think, such as should arrest our serious attention. In this Diocese, while the money returns, the number of clergy and, at a smaller rate, the number of communicants, have increased; on the other hand, in spiritual results, as reckoned by the number baptized and confirmed, what has been done during the past three years does not at all equal the results of the three previous years, nor of the three years before those. Nor is this checking of growth a local matter; if it were, it would be sufficient for us to look only for local causes. But, looking further, I find by the returns made to the General Convention, that while the gain in communicants from 1850 to 1853 was at the rate of thirty-one per cent., from 1853 to 1856 seventeen per cent., from 1856 to 1859 sixteen per cent; and while the gain in 1871 as compared with 1868 was twenty-one and one half per cent., and for the next term of three years was twenty per cent., that for the three years from 1874 to 1877, when the last enumeration was made, the gain had been only five and one half per cent. In the number of clergy also, from 1868 to 1871 the gain was eight per cent., and from

1871 to 1874 seven and one half per cent., while from 1874 to 1877 there was an actual decrease in numbers as reported, and, comparing the condition in 1850, thirty years ago, and now, there are but little more than half as many clergymen in proportion to the number of communicants of the Church now as there were then.*

Now, to whatever this condition may be due, it is sufficiently marked and widespread to demand attention, and, if possible, explanation. It seems that while in material matters the Church is maintaining its ground, in spiritual results the rate of gain, which had been strong and constant, has within a few years become very much reduced. I do not suppose that this is due to any one cause, or that I can even indicate all the elements that probably enter into the matter. It is in part due to the more aggressive attitude of the scientific opposition to Christian revelation. Part must be attributed to the greater worldliness abroad, and to the degree in which this has invaded the Church and paralyzed the distinctness of Christian living and preaching. Part is due to the extravagance which has occasioned debts on churches, and then the demoralizing methods thought necessary in order to pay them.

But I think the judgment of the greater number will go with me when I express the conviction that the dominating cause of the marked reduction in our rate of growth during the last few years is the agitation which has been going on among us in the matter of ritual. We are not at one before the world; our General Council has its sessions absorbed with this belittling matter; activities are wasted on party strifes, and in differences of bishops with presbyters and rectors with parishes. It is even conceded in behalf of the new modes of worship that they do occasion present misunderstanding, but that this will be made up by greater gains in the future on their account. We are met with the fact that, coincident with the checking of a gain for the Church which was bringing us the best accessions from all sides, was the starting of methods and controversies which, before this land, have seemed in the popular estimate, to ally us with systems and beliefs against which we protest, and in presence of which we see our whole progress brought to a standstill.

And for what is it we are encountering this loss? The right and the privilege of every one burdened with sin to come to the minister of God's

* The following are the returns made to the General Convention for the years named:

	1850.	1853.	1856.	1859.	1868.	1871.	1874.	1877.
Communicants	79,987	105,136	119,540	139,611	195,183	236,929	282,359	297,387
Clergy	1,558	1,651	1,828	2,065	2,662	2,876	3,086	3,082

word for counsel and comfort is more than allowed ; it is urged ; and the duty of such minister to use his office in public and in private to quiet the conscience and remove scruple and doubtfulness, is on all hands known. It is only when such recourse is made habitual, and becomes a virtual condition to the reception of the Holy Communion, that it becomes offensive, and the Church shrinks back in horror from the results which have always followed from enforced auricular confession. That the Holy Communion was signalized by our Lord as the great act of worship by which we should show forth His death, and that by means of the faithful receiving of the consecrated elements in that Commemorative Sacrifice we become partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood ; all this is on all sides granted, and further, that in the presence of such a mystery lowliness and reverence the most devout should be shown. It is only when the Communion is made a spectacle, when from a partaking the person becomes content with a distant adoration, and from a spiritual the mind declines to a visible presence, and when a symbolism is used which is strange to our formularies and to the knowledge of any now living ; it is only then that difference and offense come.

And the distress and distrust become the greater in the uncertainty as to whither all this may yet lead, as to how much more of doctrine and ritual may be read into formularies with which we thought ourselves familiar, and at what self-imposed restraints the work of further development will be allowed to stop. It is this drift, which takes all the fixedness and guarantees for permanence from our standards, which causes dismay, and repels those who otherwise would be drawn to our borders.

The Church will on no account give up its right to its own past, and to all of the traditions which belong to its better days ; it will not shrink into the proportions of a sect, nor be the mouthpiece of a single-school of thought ; it will not set back the hands of time and relegate itself to the days of barrenness and irreverence ; it will not give up its faith, or anything that is essential to guard it, or the tributes that devotion and beauty lay at its feet. But it cannot surrender to individual opinion its right to adjudge what it holds as of faith, nor its standard of what is permissible in its worship. This is a rationalism utterly destructive to all common authority and to the corporate life of the Church. Against this anarchy the Church must, in the interest of peace, and to restore the confidence which has been shaken, have a law that is clear ; and if it is not clear, it must be made clearer, and then it must be obeyed, lovingly and loyally, let us all hope, as seeing that all good results desired will come soonest thus ; but at any rate the law must be obeyed

by those who have promised to minister the doctrines and Sacraments of Christ, not only as Christ hath commanded, but also "as this Church hath received the same."

But harmful to our growth as such a condition of things is, I think that its continuance is due in part to the indeterminateness of some of our formularies, with regard to which charity would seem to demand that greater clearness be had. For the sake of those who desire a simple and direct statement of the Church's law, that they may loyally conform their faith and practice to it, it would seem that a tender regard for such doubts should induce prompt measures for their relief.

In the same way, now that the Church is in this country entering upon its second century of independent life, I think that it might be wise for us to consider what experience has taught us as to the application of our methods to the wants which we have here to confront. There are some of our forms in worship which embody the faith, and those we should be very slow to touch. But there are many other of the details of our services which have been again and again revised, and of which the preface in our prayer book contemplates on fit occasion further amendments. It is unnatural to think that our fathers of a hundred years ago could have so fully understood all the circumstances that should ever arise as to frame a worship that should be perfect, or that we are to be so faithless as to the presiding of God's Holy Spirit in the councils of His church still that we can doubt that He will guide this national Church to amend old or frame new Offices as local needs may require.

Twenty-five years ago the Church was stirred to its depths by what was then called the Memorial Movement; it rose to the thought that its duty was not simply to its children familiar with its Offices, but to the whole land in whose behalf it held grave responsibilities. A Commission of Bishops addressed a long series of inquiries to leading minds representing widely different schools of thought in the Church, asking them for suggestions as to the manner in which the Church could commend itself more widely and successfully to the country. The commission also put itself into communication with a number of representative non-Episcopal divines, from whom it received some very valuable and suggestive replies. The whole result was given in a report which ought often to be read when we are in danger of settling ourselves back in self-satisfied isolation and mediocrity, content with our methods because we are accustomed to them, and in timid conservatism afraid to venture changes. The report showed a general concession of the need of changes; some of which, such as the separate use of Morning Prayer, Litany and the

Communion Office, have since been realized; but others remain only as suggestions, except as there have grown up unauthorized usages.

The need of modifications conceded then has not become less since, and the existence of it underlies the discussions and nearly perfected action for the nine years last past in General Convention looking to Shortened Services. The acknowledgment of the need, and yet the failure so far to meet it, has occasioned a lawless and irresponsible use of private judgment in varying the services, which, while having much to justify it, is dangerous as a habit, and occasions the forming of unwise usages among our congregations.

There has been very little recognition of perspective in our conciliar action in this matter; we have regarded every part of our liturgy as of equal sacredness, and have been unready to touch even acknowledged wants because thereby we were thought to endanger what no one could dream of touching. We have not been equal to our opportunities by showing an elasticity in meeting wide and persistent wants; we have been content to be a denomination; we have not justified the Catholic character of the Church in seeking to adapt it to the wants of all sorts and conditions of men.

We are lamenting all through our borders the lessened attendance at Evening Prayer in our churches, when we are not making out of it all that it is capable of in interest. Why repeat again so soon, the Exhortation, Confession and so many of the prayers which we have only a little time before said in Morning Prayer, when there are so many rich stores of devotion from which we might draw? Why might not our services during the week begin with the Confession, or, as they originally did, with the Lord's Prayer, always providing that the Exhortation, which being the statement of the scriptural and reasonable warrant of what we are about to do, the congregation is reasonably familiar with, should be said every week on Sunday morning? Might not the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, those beautiful Evangelical Hymns, be restored to the place which they formerly held? In the same way, in the more frequent celebrations of the Holy Communion after the analogy of the allowance given in the Baptismal Service, it might suffice that the longer Exhortation in the Communion Service should be omitted at other times than once a month. The use of the Lord's Prayer when it recurs in the same service, as it sometimes does several times, when Offices are accumulated, might be omitted. The services as they are constructed are designed for congregations already gathered and taught, but we are constantly called upon to meet those who are wholly untaught in christian things, entirely unfitted for what is addressed to them in our Offices or for any

responsive service. This is a fixed recurring feature in all aggressive work: is it not right that the Church should recognize and provide for it? We have no service for the laying of the corner stone of churches. We have no prayer for the increase of the ministry, for missions or missionaries, for the conversion of the impenitent, for young men or Sunday schools, for deliverance from public calamities or personal peril, nor for many other occasions for which forms of prayer and thanksgiving are necessary. Where the daily service is used, it ought to be left to something better than a clergyman's caprice what should be said and what omitted. Since the days in which the service was generally said daily we have added to its length both at the beginning and ending.

We may go on as we have been doing, unwilling to make the smallest change, reducing the influence which we might be having, allowing individual judgment to do its best in emergencies not provided for. But would it not be more worthy of a great historical Church to act upon such broad needs in a brave, constitutional manner; to remember the large number whom we should be able fitly to serve, and then develop all our resources to draw, to arouse and to mould the spiritual life of the nation in which God has given us our duty.

Perhaps I would not have detained your attention upon these wide questions so long, but that the thought of the great National Council of our Church soon to assemble, in which these and other stirring matters will strongly occupy attention, is heavy on every Churchman's mind.

While I take a deep concern in the progress towards reform of the Old Catholic body in Germany and other parts of Europe, and in the measures looking towards intercommunion with the Greek Church, I confess to a deeper interest in securing a better understanding with those Christians in this country who surround us on every hand, who vie with us in good works, who give forth such manifestations of God's presence among them. I see daily, more in small villages than in large cities, but prominently everywhere, the wastage coming from divisions, the scorn and indifference in which religion is held by reason of them, the infidelity which is directly traceable to this cause, the vast spaces left to neglect because of misunderstandings, and I think our best and strongest thought, our wisest statesmanship, should be given to this matter. We are to have a care lest, becoming enamored of a far-off scheme of reform, we lose sight of the simpler duties which lie closer to us. Certainly the duty of studying the causes of difference here are quite as great as elsewhere; the ties which bind us to our separated

brethren here are closer, and the process of conciliation with those with whom we have language, many points of faith, a common country, the most intimate social and personal relations, ought to be much more hopeful than with those whom we touch at hardly any point. Certainly all our administration should be in view of reducing the separation, and not of increasing it. We may not palter with the faith and order which are in our trust, but we need not be hasty in calling all the accessories to which we have become accustomed, of the faith and unchangeable. When the time does come, and we ought to be always praying and watching for it, that this Church shall be called on to do its part towards the fulfilling of our Lord's prayer for the unity of His flock, we shall be wise if we shall be ready then, in order to contribute towards that consummate blessing, to yield much that was dear to us only less than the faith, to have gained well considered views as to what is of principle and what is only variable, and then make not grudging approaches. Perhaps the duty in this matter coming upon most of us will be that only of repressing acerbity and denunciation, of showing kindly tempers, and of rendering Christian offices as opportunity occurs. This will only be the fit accompaniment in action of the prayers which we so frequently use for the coming of God's kingdom.

The matter of dividing our national Church into Provinces has been before the General Convention for nearly thirty years. Recently a commission of Bishops has sent forth a report, prepared after a wide conference with others, which will be presented in Convention, in which they recommend the division of the Church into four Provinces separated by longitudinal lines formed by the Alleghany mountains, the Mississippi river and the Rocky mountains. In principle I am far from being opposed to a division of our great territory into Provinces; it is in line with the Church's action in the past, and convenience of administration is likely to call for a similar result with us. But when this comes, such grouping of Dioceses, to result in anything effective, must, as in all previous ages, have a large degree of homogeneity in social, political and business lines. This necessary principle is utterly violated in the report, and if this is the best result to be reached, provinces as a practical measure are far in the future. Moreover, as the measure is urged as a means of relief to the General Convention, I have not discovered in the scheme of subjects proposed to be relegated to the Provincial Synod, by those who have worked the matter out in Illinois or elsewhere, any such statement of business as would either make the Province particularly important, or relieve in any appreciable degree the business of the General Convention. One does not get an im-

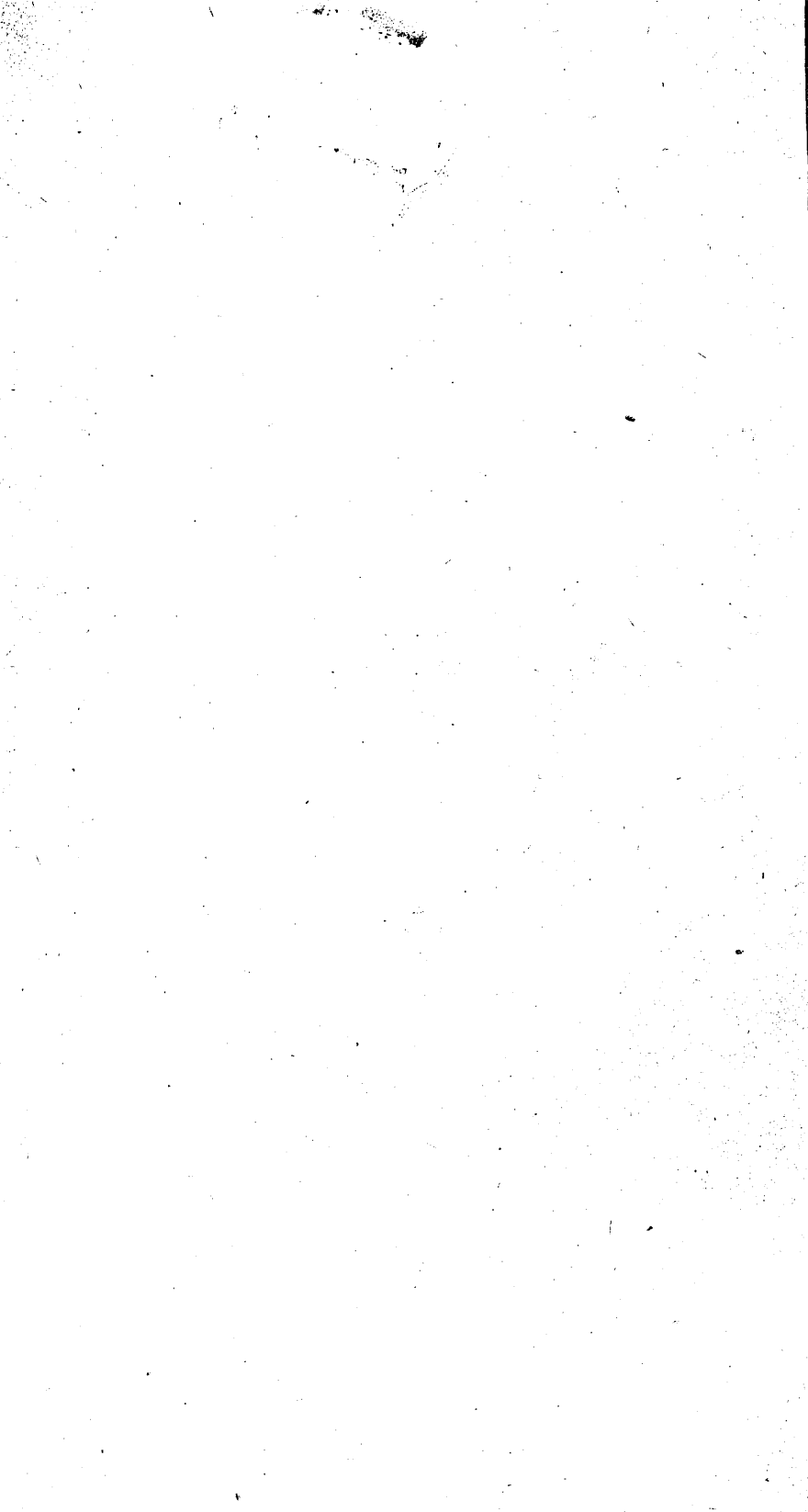
pression of the great urgency of the matters likely to come before a minor assemblage, inasmuch as with power to call together a Federate Council of the Diocese in New York State for the past twelve years, no meeting has ever been convened. Any measure which would make an interval of nine years between the meetings of our General Convention, which is a part of the provincial scheme as recommended by the commission, would, I conceive, be of great damage to the Church.

The General Convention, as a working body, needs to be relieved; but this I should rather anticipate from a stopping of the tendency shown now to centralize business there which can well be attended to by the Dioceses; from a reduction of its size, with a graduated representation, and with the expense of its deputies distributed among the Dioceses. This would induce closer business methods, and promote the assembling of the Convention in other than the Atlantic cities at times, which I should conceive to be an advantage.

Other matters of deep moment will come before the General Convention at its session. I trust that it will be remembered by you in your devotions, that it may be guided to wise conclusions.

Of course we are not to suppose that the Church's greatest reliance must be in external agencies. Let the loving compassion of Christ, our Lord, be preached with all the force you possess; be kind and considerate to those who have rejected or only partially received the truth; maintain broad, warm sympathies for those who, walking not with us, possess very much in common with us. The islands in the tropics may be separated, but you do not go far down into the warm depths below before you find them coming together and joined at their bases. Present the Church in its kindly inclusive features as the home of all God's loving children. Hold the faith, but then with apostolic wisdom lay on the people no unnecessary burdens of narrow prescriptions; let the worship be the worthiest possible, but marked by that sober moderation which comports with the law, the faith, the usage of the Church, and with a good conscience towards the brethren. Thus to our strong love and importunate prayers and resolute work, God will restore the days of old and the years of former generations.





ANNUAL ADDRESS

OF THE

BISHOP OF MISSOURI,

MAY 3d, 1882.

ST. LOUIS.

283.

ANNUAL ADDRESS
OF THE
BISHOP OF MISSOURI
TO
FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION.

Charles Franklin Robertson
app.

BRETHREN BELOVED IN THE LORD:

The interval between this and our last Convention has been but little over seven months. This has been occasioned by the change in our time of meeting from fall to spring. The settling upon the month of May as the time of our annual assemblage, which was concurred in last year by general consent, will, I hope, be accepted, as the solution of that question for some years to come. The amount of work to be reported will no doubt be affected by the shorter period in which it could be performed. The interval between this and our next Convention, which will be hereafter during the fourth week in May, will, however, be nearly thirteen months.

Shortly after we separated, last year, one of our members, who had been but a few months in the Diocese and was not present at the last Convention, was unexpectedly called to his rest. The Rev. Charles DeLancey Allen, although he had been but a little while in charge of the work in Mexico and Montgomery City, had strongly attached himself to the people, for his ability, his learning and his devotion to his duty. He worked up to the very last, and I was hardly apprised of his sickness before I learned of his death. I was at the time held to duty in a remote part of the Diocese, and could not, to my great sorrow, reach him to minister to him, as he desired, nor to be present at his funeral. I honor his memory as a loving, patient, accomplished and devoted Minister of Christ.

The extent and interest of our Diocesan work is all the while increasing. The number of clergymen in the Diocese and the number of places occupied by services were never so great as now. Along with this there are a number of places vacant, and some for months past, which ought to be immediately filled with efficient clergymen. The Rev. Mr. Silvester has come to us from Iowa to assist the overburdened Rector of this parish, and the work already shows the impetus received from his devotion and competence. I hope that such a

measure of rest as Dr. Schuyler may now perhaps better be able to take, will serve to continue to us long his valuable life and example. The Rev. Mr. Phelps, from New Jersey, is assisting Dr. Ingraham at Grace Church, in that populous district in the northern part of this city. This old parish is going through the critical but necessary change of cutting down the mound on which its church has stood, and removing and renovating a building which has been in use many years. To erect a costly church before the grade of the lot was settled, and before they could realize on their superfluous land, was clearly impossible. With the lot leveled off and the surroundings at length made pleasant, there will be assurance in planning for the future.

The Rev. Mr. Case and the Rev. Mr. Wells have come to us from the Diocese of Springfield, the former to take the parish at Springfield, which Mr. Parker left last fall in order to go to Colorado, and now to Oregon. Mr. Wells has gone to Kansas City to be the assistant of Mr. Holeman in St. Mary's, First Ward, who has, ever since our last Convention, been incapacitated for duty, and part of the time in great weakness of body. The Rev. Mr. Hahn, from Kansas, is assisting the Rector of St. Mary's, Kansas City.

The Rev. Mr. De Forest came to us from Wisconsin, and is vigorously and successfully at work in St. Paul's, South St. Louis. Mr. Grantham, from Tennessee, was for a few months in charge of the Good Shepherd in this city, which, however, he resigned at Easter, and has returned to Tennessee. The Rev. Mr. West, ordained during the year, will, I hope, immediately take charge of the Mission at Cameron, from which Mr. Waterman has withdrawn to give all his time to Chillicothe, and of the Mission in South St. Joseph.

On the other hand, we have lost the Rev. Mr. Leonard, to Kansas. The parish at Hannibal has, in the mean time, to my great regret, remained vacant. I have, however, just learned that it is at length freed from the paralyzing debt which has been resting so long on it. Now, I expect a resumption of vigorous life. Mr. Sartwelle returned to Texas, and his duty was taken by Mr. Sharpe, who, to do this, resigned Lexington, which has since remained vacant, although they are now in negotiation for a Rector. Mr. Purucker, after a year's residence in De Soto, has removed to Indiana.

The handsome stone church at Palmyra has been finished, paid for and consecrated. The smaller, but neat church, built with much self-sacrifice at Rolla, is finished and paid for. The church at Liberty awaits consecration, as does also Trinity Church, De Soto. St. Mark's Church, Butler, is also completed and without debt. The church at Independence is nearly ready for use. St. Augustine Mission, for the colored people in Kansas City, has bought and paid for a lot, and has built the foundation for its church.

In this city, St. John's Church has with a great effort freed itself from debt, as, also, to my great joy, has the Advent, which will now organize as a parish. Trinity and St. Peter's have materially reduced their obligations.

It may be remembered that the Convention of 1879 authorized the Bishop and Standing Committee to incorporate themselves as "The Parochial Trust Fund of the Diocese of Missouri," under a general law of the State, and under one of the articles of its Constitution. Such article restricted such corporation to the holding of real estate for churches, parsonages and cemeteries. The legislative enactment was wider than the articles of the Constitution under which it was passed. In drawing up the articles of incorporation of the Trust

Fund, reference was rather had to the legislative enactment than to the fundamental articles of the Constitution. In the Convention of 1880, attention was drawn to this circumstance, although the Trustees of the fund had received no property, except under the narrower limitations of the Constitution. It was then directed that the articles of incorporation of the Trust Fund should be amended so as to conform to the Constitution, and that another corporation be formed for the accomplishment of the charitable purposes mentioned in the articles of the Parochial Fund, but which it could not properly execute. To accomplish these purposes a committee was constituted, consisting of the Standing Committee and Chancellor of the Diocese, and three legal gentlemen. We have not yet received a report from that committee, but I had placed in my hands a communication from two of its members, taking ground against the validity of the Trust Fund, because of the alleged non-agreement of the general law under which it organized with the constitutional provision. I have also received several opinions from other legal gentlemen, arguing the entire validity of the organization of the Trust Fund, only advising the amendment of the articles of incorporation so as to strictly comply with the provisions of the Constitution. In the mean time a considerable number of parcels of property have been conveyed to the Trustees of the fund, who consist of the Bishop and the Standing Committee for the time being. The felt need of such a body as this for the permanent holding in trust of property for the church, so that while held and used wholly for and by the parish, it will be free from all danger of alienation or debt, or the uncertainties of special trustees or careless vestrymen, and so that, too, benefactions can be made with the greater confidence in the assurance that they will not be lost or abused, but kept to their purpose forever; this need was so widely felt that the General Convention at its last session appointed a commission on the subject, which has, by an address to the several Dioceses, urged that the tenure of church property be made more secure.

Of this there may be entire assurance, that the Parochial Trust Fund of the Diocese, being created under an act of the Legislature of this State, which bases itself upon the Constitution, and not declared invalid by any court, is a body to which, with all confidence, real estate for church, parsonage and cemetery may be conveyed in trust for congregations. Such conveyances will be binding on the grantors and the congregation, and on the trustees for the uses specified in the deed. The benefit of such a permanent body, for the security of church property, in communities so changing, and with dispositions at times so fickle, and with perceptions as to the Church's order so limited, is clear to all who will give consecutive thought to the matter, and the growing interests involved.

The annual reports of the Orphans' Home will be laid upon the table. They show a very gratifying condition in that institution. It never was extending its influence more widely than now. From personal inspection and examination, I know that the physical, and moral, and spiritual interests of the children are anxiously cared for. The Treasurer's report shows that the bills are all paid, a small balance in the treasury, the investments not trenched upon, but rather increased, and this result reached with no recourse had to doubtful ways of raising money.

The new St. Luke's Hospital building is within a few weeks of completion, and will be admirably adapted for the purposes of its erection. I have not

been able to understand the extraordinary delays in finishing it, and am compelled to report, to my great regret, that it will only be opened with a considerable debt upon it. The present contracted space of the Hospital has, for a great part of the year, been steadily filled, and many have had to be refused admission for want of room. The Sisters do their quiet work of nursing to the satisfaction of the physicians, and in a way to cause the sufferers to love the Hospital as a home. I am strongly persuaded that St. Luke's would come more closely to the sympathies of our people if a well-devised plan were steadily pushed, to secure regular subscriptions for the current needs of the institution. I think that the method which for a few years has been pursued, is faulty in several ways.

Our educational work has advanced during the year. At Macon, local financial disturbances have compelled the postponement of the effort to complete the subscriptions required before collections could begin, in order to the prosecution of work on the college building. The numbers at the academy are as large as the present accommodations will allow; they are increasing, and they are widely representative. I am afraid that the pecuniary anxieties prevailing in the county will render difficult, if not impossible, the collection of the subscriptions made there, and that this will compel a modification of the plans. With the energy of the Rector, and the steady growth of the school, we may be assured that the wisest steps will be taken for the establishment on the best permanent basis.

The St. Paul's College, Palmyra, property was sold to the Rev. Dr. Wainwright, several years ago. The situation, this year, of the school, did not, in his judgment, justify his maintaining it beyond the first term. I greatly regret the loss of his singularly qualified services as an instructor. In the mean time, he has been able to devote his attention more fully to the care of the parish. The Rev. Mr. Evans has, since the close of the school, been in charge of St. Jude's Parish, Monroe.

I cannot report any progress in the creation of a fund for the erection of a school building for the Sisters in this city. The building now leased is filled to repletion, and one of twice its size could very soon be fully occupied. The sense of need, throughout the Diocese, of a school just like this is widening and deepening. We waste opportunity for every year that we fail to provide for this primary want of our church life. But our parishes have so many plans and enterprises of their own; there are so few sagacious churchmen who think of and sympathize with interests beyond the home church, we are so slow to let in the conception of Christian and churchly education, especially for our girls, as among the first wants of our work; that we have to bide the delay with what patience we can command. In every view, an investment, at this moment, of \$25,000 for a school property would be the very best outlay that we could make for the Church's growth.

The academy at Springfield, now, since Christmas, under the care of the Rev. Geo. H. Ward, is doing a very good work. St. Mary's School, Kansas City, is carried on by the Rector of St. Mary's Church. The Rev. Mr. Wager, on removing to Mexico, last winter, resumed the school work which the Rev. Mr. Allen was prosecuting at the time of his lamented death.

The order of the Convention, at its last session, was that the consideration of the missionary work of the Diocese should be advanced to a foremost place,

and that the afternoon of the second day of the session should be given to it. You will then have the reports of the Laymen's Co-operating Society before you, and also of the Diocesan Missionary Board. As this is only a broken year, I cannot give a fair estimate of what has been done for this work, as compared with what should be done. I think, however, that you will all grant, when the list is read out of what the several parishes have done, that there has been a strange apathy and neglect of this important work. There is yet very much to be hoped for in the way of bringing this interest close to the attention of the Diocese, so as to elicit fuller parochial and personal responses in its behalf. The receipts, during the seven months, have only reached about \$1,200.00, and they should have been, at least, twice as great. The disbursements have been nearly \$600.00 in advance of the receipts. I fear that the ministers do not keep themselves informed as to the needs, the growth, the situation of the Diocese, and, lacking this definite information, do not infuse their people with a real and vivid sense of its importance. I don't hear of parochial missionary meetings, or of the special services which were enjoined last year, at which the interests and needs of our Diocesan Missionary work were to be emphasized and contributed to. In the larger parishes, only personal pledges, sought by interested collectors appointed for this purpose, will realize a sum at all commensurate with the ability of the congregation and the needs of the work. The growth and prospective importance of the Diocese is greater than that of the Dioceses about us which receive large help from the East, but we are precluded from the expectation of such aid, by the fact of our having the large City of St. Louis, which, it is thought, should take care of the needy parts.

This is now the largest and most populous Diocese in the country. In the natural course of things we must, after a time, consider the question of its division. Even now, I never go to Kansas City and St. Joseph, on our western frontier, with their large and rapidly increasing population, and the enormous industries growing up about them, without wishing that they might have a closer and more effective Episcopal supervision. That whole section needs a Bishop's entire care just now, and would yield large increased results for it. But I confess that I should feel that the day for such a consummation was likely to be much nearer, if I could see there a clearer recognition of and larger liberality towards needs and interests in that section, other than parochial, and a caring for the work naturally dependent upon the centres in that portion of the State.

I think that the Convention will be interested in knowing that the relations between the Society for the Increase of the Ministry, and myself, as Bishop, which a few years ago were interrupted for reasons which I stated to the Convention at the time, have been resumed on terms satisfactory to both sides. We are again to receive back all that is contributed by the Diocese to the general fund of the Society, with an addition of twenty-five per cent., and I again become a patron of the Society.

While no doubt there may be a fair question as to the ability and efficiency of some of those who are ordained to the ministry, and while some of those now in Orders are not employed, and others receive but inadequate salaries; yet I think that the slightest examination of the work which the Church has to do, will show that we need a constant supply of ministers, of the best possible

grade, of course; that the proportion of increase in the number of our clergymen to the increase of the strength of the Church otherwise has evidently not been maintained; and that some means must be had for helping those during their years of preparation who cannot be engaged in their own maintenance. By most persons these propositions would be considered axiomatic. The loss in numbers of our clergy each year from death and other causes average 71; the ordinations average 113; the net gain is about 42 each year, or a trifle over one per cent. The average increase in the number of communicants is nearly five per cent.; and the pastoral care of the people would require the ordination of nearly five times as many persons as are now presented, in order to keep the clerical work up to a fair state of efficiency.

A greater number of candidates for Orders are needed, and quite as much, no doubt, the highest degree of efficiency in those to be ordained. In order to this, there must be some well-concerted measures looking to the aid of those who are devoting themselves to the work of preparation. This is a need seen and provided for in every religious body. It is in analogy with the policy of the general government in the care of its cadets for the military and naval service. This desire induced the establishment of foundations, and scholarships and fellowships in the Church of England, and the older colleges of this country. If this provision is not made, then those who begin their course, fall out before ordination, because they must find elsewhere some means of support. Or else, the candidates must either have previously saved enough to carry them through their course, or must come from families who can provide for the support of their sons while preparing for Orders. This, however, is known not generally to be feasible. Or else, labor for self-support must be mingled with intellectual preparation, which is evidently destructive to all consecutive and useful work. Or else, there is a pressure for an earlier ordination, and a shorter time of study, so that the person can get into a position of self-support. This is not consistent with the best interests of the Church.

Of course aid, when rendered, cannot be squandered, and must be administered under certain well-defined principles, so as not to lower the tone of the person helped. By such aid the Church is quite as much benefited as the individual. The Society for the Increase of the Ministry wisely restricts its help to those who are pursuing their studies systematically in institutions. The aid should also be made the reward of excellence in study, as tested by examinations. Those not found to be qualified, for any cause, for the ministry should be allowed to retire. The demand for fullness of qualification is too urgent to allow the ministry to become the shelter of pious incompetence. But after all these limitations, there yet remains the need that the Church should, for its own sake, have a well-devised and ample scheme for assisting those during their period of costly preparation who are to give their lives and work to the Church.

We are all of us more conscious of the evils of our own day than of the past. We invest an earlier time with a glamor of ideal perfection. I don't think that the learning or efficiency of the clergy at any period of the past was greater than is that of the ministry of our day. No doubt, the learning abroad in the world has increased in a greater ratio. The clerk is not now the only learned person in the community. Other agencies are sharing with the Church in the

work of disseminating and enforcing religious thought and action. The book, the newspaper and the platform have appropriated a considerable part of the work which once came alone upon the clergyman. There has to be recognized a largely distributed, and oftentimes an exact knowledge about matters in which once only theologians were concerned. I am not sure that the relative dominance which the clergyman once held as towards many moral, humane and spiritual questions can ever be regained, or is desirable. About some principles, there is abroad such an assured general concession, that the Church does not need to assert its special guardianship of them. But certainly, there is furnished here an incentive, that, as regards the interests which do yet, and must still concern the clergyman—the administration of the sacraments, and the enforcement of those motives which tend to God's honor, and assured Christian living and social order, he should still see to it that he still maintains, not only an official eminence and leadership, but also one that is personal, and evident, and conceded.

Perhaps I should not have urged these considerations but that recently, attempts have been made, in certain quarters, to prove that the ministry is overstocked, and that the relations which it holds to the laity are so exceptionally vexatious and strained, that it is expedient for the Church to hold off its hands from increasing the ministerial force, and from any particular attempts to help men while preparing to enter its ranks. But the day ought to be far distant, when we, of the clergy, should look upon our position as a Tontine arrangement, by which the value of our services will be increased by keeping down the number of those who will enter the ministry. Clergymen know more about the trials of their own position than they do of the strain and anxieties of those all around them. But statistics, and even a small experience, show how many in all the forms of business either fail, or have to be contented with but a moderate success, or else come to eminence only by marked ability, and a tireless industry and tact protracted over many years. It is a part of the original contract, that we are not to have our pay in ease and large emolument. If we seek for and gain this, we are apt to have failed in the best success. We are all along led to look for another, but as real reward.

Bishops and standing committees are not endowed with an infallible discerning of spirits, and after all, we have only laymen to make clergymen out of; and, no doubt, if the layman was better, the clergyman would be improved. There are evidently some mistakes made in the matter of fitness and calling. Vestries and congregations, no doubt, are often unreasonably exacting in requirements, as well as scant in the measure of co-operation and material support. There are talents lying unused, which an ideally perfect parochial system would put to use. But looking at the matter broadly, remembering that there must be friction, and loss of power, and ill adjustment, at times, in every human system, it may be fairly said, that there are very few unemployed clergymen in the Church, of fair health and average ability, and devout earnestness, for whose non-employment an intelligible explanation may not be made. Almost every Bishop in the Church could give, at this moment, duty, with a living remuneration, to every devoted, patient, fair-minded clergyman, whose family was not larger than his ability or his industry, and who would be ready to undertake the tasks which are waiting. There is pressing need, too, in every direction, for many more clergymen than we now have.

I have sometimes thought that the relaxed hold which ministers sometimes have upon the spiritual life of their people, and the small results which often follow from pastoral visiting, come from a neglect to make known the privileges to which the people are entitled, and the sacredness which ought to attach to pastoral intercourse. The warning to the Holy Communion being read immediately after the Gospel in the morning service, while the people are standing, for this reason, and from stress of time, it is almost never entirely read. I have heard old clergymen say that they never had read more than the first few paragraphs, and old parishioners assert that they had never heard any of their ministers read it throughout. What is not thus read, has become virtually a sealed page. And yet, along with much else that should be familiar to all, the closing paragraph of Exhortation contains an intimation which ought to be thoroughly known by all our people. It is this:

“And because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God’s mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that he may receive such godly counsel and advice, as may tend to the quieting of his conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness.”

Now I venture to affirm that very few of our people have ever heard this invitation read, or knew that in terms the privilege was declared to be theirs of thus opening their griefs and receiving godly counsel and advice from the Minister of God’s Word. I fear, too, that the lack of familiarity with this loving urgency, which the Church uses in order to remove all possible scruple from the worthy receiving of the Holy Communion, causes the minister sometimes to forget what tender and sacred communications may often be trembling on the lips almost ready to impart themselves to the sympathizing ear. Of course, to the fullest success in the Church’s ministry there must not only be authority, but also the capacity to appreciate spiritual questions, to enter into the anxieties of others with sympathy, to give competent advice, and then to preserve confidences. When this disposition is shown, then there will not fail to come the expression of wants and difficulties, and the desire for counsel which will greatly increase the depth and usefulness of a person’s work. But the likelihood of this will be vastly enhanced, if to the people can be made known the provision and the expectation had that such opening of griefs and resorting for godly counsel and advice is a normal and recurring disposition and need.

For the lack of such knowledge those who are spiritually vested, thinking that there is no provision for their case in the Church, are often tempted to resort to the confessional and to the ministrations of a foreign church, or to erect about a suddenly discovered privilege superstitions and incidents altogether alien to the natural, orderly place that this privilege has in the economy of our Church, when it is thoroughly administered.

Quite as great, in my judgment, would be the benefit of this to the pastoral intercourse of minister and people. It is commonly conceded that, as now generally prosecuted, it is attended with a large expenditure of time and inadequate spiritual result. The time is taken up with social commonplaces; the minister hardly sees or expects or is expected to see all the family. On

all sides it is felt to be an unworthy use of time. And all this when on both sides there is a consciousness of needs not met, and intercourse dissipating itself into trifles because of the lack of expectation of anything better. I very urgently, therefore, press upon my reverend brethren the great need that they take early and frequent occasion to make known to their people the provision which the Church has lovingly and long ago made for the relief of spiritual griefs and doubts, and that they be ready to receive such communications with preparedness and sympathy, and endeavor to lift the intercourse between minister and people into a higher and better region than it has usually occupied.

There is a matter of wide social concern, which not unfrequently in our day becomes a practical question to parochial ministers, which ought to receive a wider attention. It is that of the relation of the Church to the subject of divorce and re-marriage. The law of Christ is explicit in declaring that the marriage bond is indissoluble, except by death, or as towards the innocent party in the case of adultery; and that re-marriage, except for such innocent person, on the part of those separated, is not by it permitted. The law of this Church, however, as interpreting and enforcing the divine law in this matter, was put forth so late, and until recently was so vague, that there has been a not unnatural dimness of perception, among otherwise devout Christian persons, as touching the requirements of God's Word on this subject. In the mean time the law of the State has practically become the test of conscience in the matter for minister and people. How loose and variant from God's Word the civil law in various parts of the country has become on this subject, and by consequence from this what a riot of self-will and passion is on us, breaking up homes, and scattering sorrow and desolation, we all of us know. The permanence of the State is dependent on the security of the home and the family tie, and the Church's office is to maintain this and enforce God's law. This is made more difficult by the confused standards set forth by the civil law in different places, and the large degree of ignorance as to the requisitions of the divine law, and as based upon this of the Church's law. We imply that because the canon on the subject is set forth in the Digest, that therefore there has been such proclamation of the law as will inform and bind the consciences and actions of Christian persons. The fact, however, is that very few of our people have ever seen the law, or know of its existence or provisions. They are held to the performance under penalties of obligations of which previously they were hardly aware. The wandering eye, the growing alienation, the vagrant thought, and the permitted wish, which contemplates and drifts on towards separation and another alliance, would not so often find place, if there was a clear notion of the duty and sin, as decided by the law of Christ, and the perception of the fact that for Christian persons this law is the supreme test of duty. And then often the minister has to make known the requisitions of God's Word after there had been advances and committal which had become more difficult to be receded from.

These principles, then, ought to be made clear. The law of the Church on the subject is merely the law of Christ. It invents nothing. It but declares God's will in Christ, as touching the inviolability of marriage, and the sin of promiscuous separations; and then, of the impossibility for persons to be joined, except as God's word allows. It declares that it can sanction no marriages of those who had been previously married, when the other party is still

living, except in the case of the innocent person in the case of a divorce by reason of adultery. If such adultery was not proved in the action for divorce, then it must otherwise be sufficiently proved before a marriage sought for can be solemnized. The Church cannot be expected to take risks, when those seeking its offices have failed to establish the ground on which they make their plea. If this law, which is the law of God, is willfully broken, then the offenders must be restrained from the sacraments and other means of grace in the Church, for just the same reason that those are repelled who break any other of the laws of God. They are not fitted to receive them with profit. In case of doubtfulness as to the facts in the case, reference is to be had to the Bishop. Since the execution of the law is binding on the conscience of the clergyman, and the emergency may, at any moment arise, however difficult and delicate the matter is, charity would require that means should be taken to make the requisitions of God's law and the Church's order on the subject, known to the people.

In the work that lies before us in this Convention, in the spirit in which all our deliberations shall be prosecuted. I trust that, asking for and expecting the presence of God's Holy Spirit, we may do somewhat to set forward the work of Christ's Gospel, for the helping and the saving of men in this portion of the Church, of which God has imparted to each of us, in part, the trust.



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